

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 05262 01 OF 02 161746Z
ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 05262

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FOR: USINFO FOR IOP/M, IPS/PE, IEU; STATE FOR EUR/NE,
ROOM 5141 AND EUR/RPM

E.O. 11652 N/A

SUBJECT: BELGIAN MEDIA REACTION

ATTACK AND COUNTERATTACK IN THE MIDDLE EAST CAPTURED THE
BELGIAN MEDIA'S ATTENTION THIS WEEK:

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE MARCH 16 WROTE: "BY SENDING TENS OF
THOUSANDS OF TROOPS TO SOUTH LEBANON, MR BEGIN TORPEDOES
IN FACT THE CHANCES OF A MAN LIKE SADAT WHO MADE PEACE
PROPOSALS WORTH DISCUSSING.... LAST SATURDAY'S MASSACRE
WAS OBVIOUSLY ORGANIZED TO BLOCK THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE
MIDDLE EAST. BY REACTING THE WAY HE DOES, MR BEGIN UN-
FORTUNATELY MAKES HIMSELF OBJECTIVELY THE ALLY OF THE
PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS."

LA CITE THE SAME DAY SAID: "THE U.S. IS GUARANTEEING THE
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON. AN EXTENDED OCCUPATION
OF THE SOUTH OF THAT COUNTRY WOULD QUICKLY BECOME A
'CASUS BELLI'. THE U.S. DOES NOT WANT IT. THE ISRAELIS
WOULD BE THUS FORCED, TO AVOID MAJOR INTERNATIONAL DIFFI-
CULTIES, TO WITHDRAW AFTER HAVING DESTROYED A FEW HASTILY
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 05262 01 OF 02 161746Z

BUILT CAMPS AND MAKESHIFT FORTIFICATIONS. IT IS INEVITABLE
THAT THE PALESTINIANS WILL COME BACK... THUS, WHILE PARA-
LYZING PEACE ATTEMPTS ... THE ISRAELI LEADERS ARE NOURISH-
ING AMONG THEIR POPULATION A DANGEROUS STRATEGIC
ILLUSION."

IN DE STANDAARD MARCH 16 MANU RUYS APPROVED THE BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO CLOSE THE PLO OFFICE IN BRUSSELS

AS WAS REPORTELY REQUESTED BY THE ISRAELIS. "THOSE WHO ARE IN A DESPERATE SITUATION -- AND THIS IS THE CASE OF THE UPROOTED, DISPLACED PALESTINIANS -- CAN ONLY BE MADE MORE FANATICAL BY EACH REJECTION, BY EACH NEGATIVE REACTION. THEREFORE, THE MOST RECENT ATTACK OF THE ISRAELI ARMY AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS -- INDEPENDENTLY FROM ITS ATROCITY-- WILL NOT BRING THE POLITICAL PROBLEM CLOSER TO A SOLUTION EITHER. BELGIUM ADOPTS IN THE EC DELIBERATIONS A MEDIUM POSITION IN THE LARGE SPECTRUM OF VIEWPOINTS WHERE PRO-ISRAELI NETHERLANDS AND PRO-ARAB FRANCE HOLD THE MOST EXTREME ONES. THE BELGIAN POSITION RECEIVES OUTSIDE OF EUROPE MORE THAN CASUAL ATTENTION, BECAUSE IT IS OFTEN SEEN AS THE GREATEST COMMON DENOMINATOR OF EC VIEWS... THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS RIGHTLY REFUSING TO TAKE SIDES. A BALANCED APPROACH OF THE VIEWPOINTS IS THE ONLY WAY TO RECONCILIATION AND PEACE."

ON THE CSCE WINDUP IN BELGRADE, LA LIBRE BELGIQUE MARCH 11 CARRIED AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "WHAT A PITY" WHICH SAID THAT "IT IS QUITE CERTAIN THAT (THE SOVIETS) WOULD HAVE HAD TO YIELD ONCE AGAIN IN BELGRADE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS IF ALL WESTERN CAPITALS HAD UNDERSTOOD THE ADVISABILITY OF SHOWING FIRMNESS. AND TO THE EXTENT THAT SOME COUNTRIES CONSIDERED THE AMERICAN POSITION TO BE EXCESSIVE, THEY COULD AT LEAST HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FORM UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BRUSSE 05262 01 OF 02 161746Z

WITH WASHINGTON A COMMON FRONT INSTEAD OF GOING TO THE BATTLE IN EXTENDED ORDER. AS OF NOW IT IS LEGITIMATE TO ASSUME THAT THE KREMLIN HAS CLEVERLY EXPLOITED THE SITUATION AND THAT THE BIG LOSERS ARE THE DISSENTERS: THE JUDGES WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE UP FOR THE TIME LOST."

LE SOIR MARCH 11 WROTE:"THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO DRAW UP THE BALANCE SHEET OF THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FINAL DECLARATION OF HELSINKI AND TO STUDY THE MEANS TO REINFORCE SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE HAS PRACTICALLY ENDED ON A STATEMENT OF DEFAULT AFTER TWENTY WEEKS OF PERFECTLY UNPALATABLE DIPLOMATIC PARLEYS OCCASIONALLY MARKED BY ORATORY DENUNCIATIONS WHICH HAD NO BETTER SUCCESS IN CAPTIVATING PUBLIC OPINION, AT LEAST IN THE WESTERN WORLD. NEITHER OF THEM HAVE PRACTICALLY ACHIEVED ANYTHING EXCEPT TO SATISFY THE SOVIET UNION, WHOSE MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS PRECISELY THAT THIS CONFERENCE BE USELESS... IF AFTER THE PARENTHETICAL PAUSE OF THE CONFERENCE THE TRIALS OF IMPRISONED MILITANTS ARE RESUMED IN FULL STRENGTH IN THE SOVIET UNION IT WILL BECOME DEFINITELY CLEAR THAT THIS TIDAL WAVE OF WORDS AND OF OBSCURE DISCUSSIONS WOULD HAVE HAD NO OTHER RESULT THAN

TO DISGUISE A RATHER SINISTER DECEPTION."

E. TROCH (LUC VANDEWEGHE) IN DE STANDAARD MARCH 11
ASSAILED BOTH THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION FOR THEIR
ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. THE SOVIET UNION
HE WROTE "REGARDS WESTERN PROTESTS AS NOTHING ELSE BUT
MEDDLESOMENESS AND AS A MEANS TO FAN THE COLD WAR. IT IS
A RATHER STRANGE ARGUMENT WHEN ONE NOTES THAT THE SOVIET
UNION'S LOUD PROTESTS AGAINST OTHER COUNTRIES' TREATMENT
OF THEIR OWN CITIZENS APPEAR NOT TO BE COVERED BY THE

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 05262 02 OF 02 161747Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 05262

NOTION OF 'NON-INTERFERENCE' IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. MOSCOW
IS STRONGLY TEMPTED TO APPLY NON-INTERFERENCE TO ITS OWN
SITUATION AND AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE TO THE NON-COMMUNIST
WORLD... AS FAR AS THE U.S. IS CONCERNED""THE ARTICLE
CONTINUED,"IT IS EASY FOR AMERICA TO REPEAT CONSTANTLY
THAT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED IN EASTERN EUROPE....
SHE IS RELUCTANT TO REQUIRE THE RESPECT OF THESE RIGHTS
FROM COUNTRIES WITH WHICH SHE IS DOING GOOD BUSINESS. LET
US ONLY RECALL PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO THE SHAH OF
IRAN. WHEN TAKING OFFICE AND BEFORE THAT THE PRESIDENT
STRONGLY EMPHASIZED THE ISSUE OF RESPECTING AND VIOLATING
HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT HE MADE A FEW EXCEPTIONS 'WHERE AMERICA'S
STRATEGIC INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE' (SOUTH KOREA FOR IN-
STANCE).... THE AMERICANS KNOW THAT IN MOST OF CENTRAL
AND SOUTH AMERICA HUMAN RIGHTS ARE BEING VIOLATED. IF
THEY WERE TO ADOPT A LOGICAL POSITION THEY SHOULD PUT
MUCH MORE PRESSURE ON THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THAN
THEY ARE DOING NOW. THEN THEIR MORAL POSITION WOULD BE
MORE SOLID THAN IT IS NOW."

FINALLY, JEAN POCHET,U.S. CORRESPONDENT OF LESOIR,DISCUSSED
MARCH 15 WHAT HE SAW AS A CHANGE OF STYLE BY ZBIGNIEW

BRZEZINSKI. HIS ARTICLE HEADED, "WHEN 'ZBIG' WANTS TO EMULATE KISSINGER" SAID THAT BRZEZINSKI "NOW WANTS TO PROVE THAT HE CAN BE AS TOUGH, DETERMINED, THREATENING, UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 05262 02 OF 02 161747Z

AGGRESSIVE AND IRRITABLE AS KISSINGER... IN HIS NEW ROLE 'ZBIG' HAS NOT WON GENERAL SYMPATHY, AND AS IS OFTEN THE CASE IN PERSONALITY CHANGES, HE SEEMS TO EXCEED THE NORM. DURING A MEETING WITH IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, HE WAS 'BRUTAL, VOCIFEROUS, THREATENING'. AT A MOMENT WHEN THE RELATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT WITH THE AMERICAN JEWS ARE NOT AT THEIR HIGHEST IT WAS NOT THE MOST APPROPRIATE ATTITUDE... 'ZBIG'S PROBLEM IS TO EMERGE FROM THE SHADOW, BY PAYING THE PRICE FOR IT. KISSINGER, FOR ONE, HAS NEVER ENTERED IT."ITEM

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